

Ranch Committee, Freedman/Travertine  
1639 6th St.  
Coachella, Ca 92236

June 20, 1981

Brother Pete Velasco, Secretary Treasurer  
United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO  
P. O. Box 62  
Keene, Ca 93531

Dear Brother Pete (and Sister Esther),

Many thanks for sending us a copy of your correspondence with Freedman/Travertine worker Clare Runtal. Literally hundreds of workers have been asking the Committee, since Christmas of 1980, when the Vacation Plan checks will arrive, and it is with considerable degree of embarrassment and shame that we must repeatedly tell them we have no idea... At least your letter indicates to us where our inquiries should be sent. For a period we got the royal shuffle, with people in RFK telling us they had never heard of the plan, Kent brushing us off, "it's Ralph Magana's fault and he left two years ago..." It is this kind of service which seriously discredits the Union in the eyes of new and marginal members who do not realize the many benefits the union is providing (since non-union companies in Coachella always pay the same or slightly more in wages as does Freedman).

The Committee decided in the past negotiations to drop this plan specifically because of the miserable service we had consistently received from La Paz. The Ranch Community was in almost unanimous agreement. We assured the workers, however, that all those nickel contributions between 1/1/80 and 6/10/80 would be paid as soon as the calendar year ended. For many it will be \$5 or \$10, maybe just a 6-pack, or a ticket for the movies. For others like me, we'll be hoping for about \$25 or \$30. Others are hoping for about \$40. In all, I would estimate Freedman/Travertine workers are due about \$20,000, and I would guess much more than that is lying in the fund, unclaimed from previous years. Unfortunately, other companies were involved in the Plan, or the Freedman workers could try to get that money back for the Ranch Community. I would guess it is mostly ours. An unfortunate experiment, a good idea (of Eliseo's) when it was started in 1977, but one that just didn't work out.

Since I anticipated problems as soon as we began making inquiries this past January, I told our Field Office Director, Saul Martinez (and the RFK office), that I would be available for a couple of weeks after the pruning/tying ended, to go to La Paz and type the checks up, especially if the advance work of computing the amount of the checks was already done. At that time, Kent (who apparently has nothing to do with the Plan) told my wife Debbie that no-one in La Paz knew anything about the Plan, that he would put my name on a list in case they needed any help, in effect, "Don't call us, we'll call you..." And then nothing... So the Committee and Field Office take the heat (as we did when the negotiations started two months late last year) but the whole union receives the discredit. There are those in the isolation of La Paz, who have never worked under a Union contract, have never served on a Ranch Committee, who don't seem to realize that it is worse to promise a major benefit like this (or the Pension Plan), and then not deliver, than to have no benefit at all. I know you have had nothing to do with mess-up, Pete, and I appreciate your taking the time to get some action. The Company is still holding about \$60,000 they owe us in Retroactive Pay from 1977 (Lord knows where that is in the Courts), and now this... we get cynical,



the company and the offices up there in La Paz seem to have the same attitude towards us dumb farm workers.... let 'em wait. Basta Ya Basta!

So much for my grumbling. The new Vision Plan is a great success, at least in my crew, where every worker is aware of the benefit, how to get it, many, many taking advantage. I had been worried that with the tight eligibility requirements (60 hours in a month, which is actually not that easy at Freedman, especially for the 500-800 workers who only work in the Thinning and Harvest, and can no longer combine family hours) would be resulting in Freedman workers actually receiving fewer benefits, more benefits for a few workers, but the vast majority stuck with many months without coverage (I'll have to pay for August through November, and March for this year, 5 months out of 12, and I'm medium seniority (about 200) in the highest seniority crew, so I'm way better off than most. But with the Vision benefit, if the workers knew about the benefit (the Committee's job), how to use it, someone with just harvest hours can pick up \$300-\$400 worth of optical benefit for the whole family. And the service from Sacramento is fast. The doctors I went to were so friendly as soon as they say the certification, no hassle, no money down, good service. Score another real advance for Jessica, RFK, Cesar, to whomever gets the credit, and many thanks from us. Along with the Clinic, RFK is by far our most valuable benefit.

But if you can help to move anything to get us our Vacation checks, it really will be appreciated. I'm going off the Committee for the coming year (Debbie is in school and the little girls just take too much time) and the Committee may be considerably changed in elections next week (with the workers mad at the committee in part because of these checks), but contact Saul if there is any chance of getting them out before the workers leave the Valley (about July 26). If they are not out, it is possible I would have some time to type checks at the end of the summer, or in the fall, though I felt pretty burned and insulted when I offered in the Spring.

Best wishes to Dolores and to our other brothers and sisters in La Paz.

Viva la causa,

Doug Adair, acting Secretary, Ranch Committee  
Workers of Freedman/Travertine  
United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO



MESSAGE

REPLY

TO Kent Winterrowd, Dir. FROM Peter G. Velasco  
Pension Plan Sec.-Treas.

DATE 5/16/81



DATE May 15, 1981

Re: Nagi Daifallah Farm workers Pooled  
Vacation Plan

Brother Claro Runtal ~~wxx~~ was one of the early  
strikers in 1965.

Five cents per/hour had been deducted from  
his check every payday.

He want to have his benefit paid accord-  
to his letter herein enclosed with the  
application signed by the Committee Secret-  
ary.

Please let me know what can be done to  
get his benefit?

Thank you.

SIGNED

INSTRUCTIONS TO SENDER 1. Keep pink copy 2. Send white and yellow copies

Brother Pete:

Kent is not involved with the NDVP  
so has referred this to me for  
response. The Vacation Plan is  
presently being computerized so all  
payments can be brought up to  
date. There has been no action on  
any requests since Ralph Magana left.  
We don't know when this will be ready  
but hope it will be within the next  
1½ months. Two clarifications: the  
5¢ per hr is an employer contribution  
and is not deducted from the paycheck.  
Also, when the Freedman contract was  
renegotiated in June 1980 the Vacation  
Plan was deleted, so that company has  
made no contributions since that date  
and those workers will not have  
benefits coming for this period. If  
you have any questions, please let me  
know.

SIGNED

INSTRUCTIONS TO RECEIVER 1. Write reply 2. Keep yellow copy, return white copy to sender

May 18, 1981

Bro.  
DEAR CLARO, ...RE: NAGI DAIFALLAH FARMWORKERS POOLED VACATION PLAN.

I AM SENDING YOU THE REPLY TO YOUR REQUEST TO CLAIM YOUR NAGI DAIFALLAH POOLED  
VACATION PLAN.

ESTHER WINTERROW REPLIED TO MY MEMO AS OF ABOVE. PLEASE READ THIS TO YOUR MEMBERS  
AND EXPLAIN. FUTURE LETTERS OF INQUIRY MUST BE SENT TO HER. I REQUEST THAT YOU SEND  
ME A XEROX COPY OF YOUR LETTER SO I CAN MAKE A FOLLOW-UP.

I AM AT YOUR SERVICE. BEST REGARDS TO ALL.

CC: DOUG ADAIR, SECRETARY ✓  
RANCH COMMITTEE

PETER G. VELASCO  
SECRETARY-TREASURER